

Message Text

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20

ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 (ISO) W

----- 019834

P R 140846Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2102

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

CDR JCRC NKP

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0256

D/PW FOR SIEVERTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: AMCIT CHARLES DEAN AND CANCELLATION OF SOTH PHETRASY'S
MISSION TO AUSTRALIA

1. AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY (CRANAGE) HAS JUST INFORMED US THAT PGNU AID-SEEKING MISSION TO AUSTRALIA HEADED BY LPF MINISTER OF ECONOMY SOTH PHETRASY WAS CANCELLED, OR AT LEAST INDEFINITELY POSTPONED, AT LAST MINUTE MORNING OF JANUARY 14 BECAUSE AUSTRALIANS COULD NOT GUARANTEE THERE WOULD BE NO DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST SOTH OVER THE DETENTION OF NEIL SHARMAN. SOTH AND PARTY WERE DUE TO DEPART VIENTIANE AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 14.

2. WE ARE STILL TRYING TO SORT OUT EXACTLY WHO DID WHAT TO WHOM, BUT INITIAL AUSTRALIAN READING IS THAT THE CANCELLATION REPRESENTS A VIENTIANE SIDE PLOY TO PUT THE LPF IN AN EMBARRASSING POSITION. THE RECOMMENDATION THAT SOTH'S TRIP BE CANCELLED MAY HAVE EMERGED FROM VIENTIANE SIDE'S REGULAR PRE-CABINET STRATEGY SESSION MORNING JANUARY 14, AND VIENTIANE SIDE EVIDENTLY GOT SOTH (AND FONMIN PHOUMI VONGVICHIT) WORRIED ABOUT SOTH'S RECEPTION IN AUSTRALIA. RESULT WAS PHONE CALL FROM SOTH TO
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AUSTRALIAN CHARGE ZOLLER ASKING FOR A GUARANTEE OF NO DEMOSTRA-

TIONS; ZOLLER VISITED SOTH TO CONVEY REPLY THAT HE ANTICIPATED NOTHING MORE THAN QUESTIONS FROM PRESS BUT COULD NOT RULE OUT DEMONSTRATIONS. PHOUMI WAS PRESENT FOR PART OF THIS MEETING.

3. ACCORDING TO CRANAGE, VIENTIANE SIDE SECSTATE FOR PUBLIC WORKS, HOUMPHANH SAIGNASITH, SOTH'S DEPUTY ON THESE MISSIONS, CALLED UPI TO MAKE SURE THAT NEWS OF THE CANCELLATION, AND REASON FOR IT, GOT OUT. WIRE-SERVICE STORIES PRESUMABLY FILED BY NOW.

4. WHATEVER THE GENESIS OF THE CANCELLATION, THIS DEVELOPMENT SHOULD HELP TO HEIGHTEN PRESSURE ON LPF TO RELEASE SHARMAN AND CHARLES DEAN.

5. PLEASE PASS FOREGOING TO HOWARD DEAN.
WHITEHOUSE

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